

UPPER YUKON RIVER FISHERY INVESTIGATIONS, 1972

by

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### INTRODUCTION

The objectives of the upper Yukon River fishery investigations project were:

1. Monitor the commercial and subsistence salmon fishery on the Tanana and upper Yukon River.
2. Sample the catches from fishwheels; noting size, sex, and take a scale from each sampled fish for age determination.
3. Help the fishermen with difficulties in understanding the commercial and subsistence fishing regulations.
4. Issue "Intent to Operate" forms to persons wishing to buy and sell fish or to fishermen wishing to sell fish to the public.
5. Issue subsistence fish permits for the Tanana River.
6. Instruct the buyers and sellers in the proper filling out and distribution of fish tickets.
7. Keep a running total of fish recorded on fish tickets.
8. Assist in enforcement of hunting and sport fishing regulations and be able to answer many general questions that the public directs to any Dept. of Fish and Game employee.
9. Make one trip to Lake Minchumina to check on the commercial fishery for whitefish.

### Equipment and Transportation

Office space was available from the Sport Fish Division in Fairbanks as was warehouse space for storage of equipment. I found a pack

frame and sack and an efficient container for sampling equipment, supplies, personal gear, etc., to be taken to the villages. Some airstrips are a mile or more from the village and a pack is easy to carry. I recommend that the Department provide a pack for use in the future on this project. Office supplies are available from the Fairbanks office.

A pickup truck was loaned to us by the Game Division for the summer. This was used to travel to Nenana and around Fairbanks.

Commercial airlines can be used to travel to nearly all of the villages on the Yukon River. The following scheduled airlines provide service to the indicated villages:

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Tanana Air Taxi:       | Galena<br>Ruby<br>Tanana  |
| Wien Consolidated:     | Galena<br>Tanana<br>Fort Yukon  |
| Ft. Yukon Air Service: | Tanana<br>Rampart<br>Stevens Village<br>Beaver<br>Fort Yukon<br>Circle<br>Eagle |

No! All three provide printed schedules on request. Galena, Ruby, Tanana, Fort Yukon and Eagle have charter operators available. Free rides with Sterling True of Nenana were available to Stevens Village, Rampart, Tanana, and Ruby. He makes daily trips to these villages when the egg take by the fishermen warrants.

Transportation by boat from Tanana to Rampart was available with Wilfred (Tod) Kozevnikoff. This proved to be efficient and practical in that Tod would stop at the fish camps along the way and he would make the round trip for \$50.00 - much less than an air charter would cost. I paid him by buying gas at the N.C. Company in Tanana with an F.P.O.

### General Information

Date of hire was June 23. I worked in Fairbanks getting familiar with the job and preparing equipment for my first trip.

July 5 - I flew to Tanana on Tanana Air Taxi. The first contact to make here is Paul Beard. He is the Wien agent and lives there at the airport. He and his wife are very helpful and will give directions to the other fishermen in the village. Paul is also the primary fish buyer in Tanana. Lester Erhart also works for Wien and is one of the best fishermen in the village. Tod Kozevnikoff is the best net fisherman in the area and also helpful when problems arise.

The only overnight facility available this year was the hospital, where a bed cost \$2.00 and meals were \$1.00 each. However, Tod was building a lodge that will be available next year. The Beards had an extra cot in the back room that I used when the hospital was full. I paid for the use of the cot by helping them clean fish and doing other odd jobs.

On this date, fishing was very poor due to high water and a great deal of drift in the Yukon River. In fact, all fishwheels were out of the water and Tod lost 2 nets.

I went to Rampart on this date with Tod. We stopped at Reinhard Rupprecht's camp at the rapids between Tanana and Rampart. High water and drift was preventing him from fishing.

Peter Evans, at Rampart, had his wheel in but not turning. Weisner's canning operation was closed down due to not meeting State health requirements. Overnight lodging is available here in a cabin of Weisner's. It is generally possible to "bum" a ride from Rampart to Tanana by boat if air transportation is not available.

July 8 - I drove to Nenana to check on the shipment of the ADF&G skiff to Marshall on Yutana Barge Lines. This was the first day of fishing, one wheel and one net.

July 11 - Mike Geiger and I flew to Galena on Tanana Air Taxi. Checked the one commercial fisherman and issued her an "Intent to Operate". Chartered Galena Air Service to Ruby. Talked to two commercial fishermen there, then continued on to Tanana for the night. We sampled Lester Erhart's and Paul Beard's catches in the morning. There were no other wheels in at Tanana.

July 12 - We returned to Fairbanks and Mike continued on to Anchorage. Sterling True came into the office for an "Intent to Operate". He is the egg processor at Nenana.

July 13 - Drove to Nenana; little fishing effort at this time. Thomas Albert will start his wheel in a few days. I talked to Edmund Lord for the first time. He planned to process eggs, but it turned out that True got most of the eggs in the area.

July 17 - Flew to Fort Yukon on Ft. Yukon Air Service. Chartered to Circle and Eagle. Only one subsistence fisherman at Circle. Raymond Bell was fishing commercially 40 miles upstream from Circle at Webber Creek. Martini and Waller are the only two commercial fishermen at Eagle. I issued "Intent to Operate" forms to both parties. Returned to Fort Yukon and spent the night at the Sourdough Inn.

July 18 - Flew to Stevens Village and discovered that the two commercial fishermen there are fishing downstream from the village. William Pitka is on an island at the mouth of the Ray River and Kilbourn George is camped at the head of the canyon below the village. I returned to Fort Yukon and Fairbanks.

July 20 - I flew to Tanana, sampled Erhart's and Beard's catches. Still little fishing effort by the natives. Returned to Fairbanks on the 21st.

July 25 - Went with Charles Anderson on the Tanana River at Fairbanks. There were 6 fishwheels operating downstream from the mouth of the Chena River. I sampled Anderson's catch of 15 chum salmon.

July 26 - I drove to Nenana, sampled Tom Albert's catch. Steve Tack and George Van Wyhe reported seeing 8 king salmon up the north Fork of the Goodpaster River.

July 31 - Went with Charles Anderson again on the Tanana River which is very high. A few kings are still being caught.

August 2 - Tanana on this date, only one wheel turning with a catch of 3 chums in 24 hours. Seems to be a lull between the king and chum runs. Returned to Fairbanks as it wouldn't have been worth the money to go to Ruby or Rampart. Reports from these two villages were similar to that in Tanana. The general feeling is that the king run was very poor this year.

August 7 - Sampled Tom Albert's catch at Nenana and talked to Sterling True. He has stopped flying to the Yukon River villages due to lack of eggs.

August 9 - Drove to Nenana with Mike Geiger. Sampled Albert's catch, talked to True, and returned to Fairbanks. In the P.M., we flew to Lake Minchumina with a charter of Al Wright's. We talked to Val Blackburn about his whitefish fishery. Sales are poor in Fairbanks but the BLM is becoming a good buyer. Their native crews prefer fish to beef.

August 10 - Mike and I went with Charles Anderson on the Tanana River at Fairbanks. There were 7 operating fishwheels downstream from the Chena River.

August 14 - Sampled Albert's catch in Nenana and arranged to ride to the Yukon with True.

August 15 - I flew to Stevens Village with Sterling True. William Pitka and Kilbourn George felt that this year's king salmon catch was about normal. They had moved their camps back to the village and were subsistence fishing for chums. We continued on to Rampart and Tanana.

August 16 - Sampled Paul Beard's catch of 68 chums. Returned to Fairbanks with True in the afternoon.

August 22 - I drove to Nenana, sampled Tom Albert's catch and talked to True and Edmond Lord. Lord's large scale egg processing operation that Lord had planned, didn't work out. True got most of the eggs in the area, because he would pick them up from the fishermen.

Upper Yukon Area  
Intent to Operate Filed, 1972

|                           |                          |           |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Frank Gurtler             | 17 Blanche St.           | Fairbanks |
| Charles Anderson          | 1321 Karen St.           | Fairbanks |
| Glenn L. Miller           | 226 Northward Bldg.      | Fairbanks |
| Les Fickes                | Box 2618                 | Fairbanks |
| Weisner Trading Co.       |                          | Rampart   |
| Peter Merry               | 1206 Coppett             | Fairbanks |
| Paul Beard                | Box 72                   | Tanana    |
| Henry Ketzler             | Box 35                   | Nenana    |
| Edmond Lord               | Box 26                   | Nenana    |
| Clarence J. Waller        | Box 72                   | Eagle     |
| Albert M. Yrjana          |                          | Ruby      |
| Dale's                    | 5 mi. Airport Rd.        | Fairbanks |
| Lloyd Pike                | 4-1/2 mi. Airport Rd.    | Fairbanks |
| Hazel M. Strassburg       | Box 46                   | Galena    |
| Sterling True             | Box 335                  | Nenana    |
| Josef Schruf              | 1-3/4 mi. Goldstream Rd. | Fairbanks |
| Wilfred (Tod) Kozevnikoff | Box 112                  | Tanana    |
| Thomas Albert             | Box 95                   | Nenana    |
| Cathrine Ludecker         | 331 Clay Street          | Fairbanks |
| David G. Martini          | Box 4                    | Eagle     |
| Ruben Esau                | General Delivery         | Nenana    |



1972 Commercial Licenses Issued  
for 334-40

Galena

|                    |                  |       |
|--------------------|------------------|-------|
| Hazel Strassburg   | Box 46           | Y-501 |
| Everard G. Boothby | General Delivery |       |

Ruby

|                   |         |        |
|-------------------|---------|--------|
| Billy Captain Sr. | Box 16  | Y-398  |
| Lorraine M. Honea | Box 27  | Y-1000 |
| Dennis Mackinnon  | Koyukuk | Y-1058 |
| Albert M. Yrjana  | Box 5   | Y-512  |

Tanana

|                           |         |        |
|---------------------------|---------|--------|
| Ralph N. Albert           | Box 12  | Y-1059 |
| Paul D. Beard             | Box 72  | Y-503  |
| Dolores M. Beard          | Box 72  | Helper |
| Joseph Darbyshire         | Box 83  | Y-1051 |
| Robert F. Ebenal          | Box 73  | Y-1052 |
| Marian E. Edwin           | Box 39  | Y-1063 |
| Bertha K. Folger          | Box 12  | Y-1061 |
| James R. Folger           | Box 136 | Y-986  |
| Wilfred (Tod) Kozevnikoff | Box 112 | Y-505  |
| William H. McLaughlin     | Box 83  | Y-993  |
| Jim D. Temple             | Box 65  | Y-990  |
| Walter E. Woods Sr.       | Box 38  | Y-1057 |
| Robert B. Norberg         | Box 24  | Y-1182 |
| Lester C. Erhart          | Box 133 | Y-527  |

Rampart

|                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| Peter T. Evans  | Y-518 |
| Turak J. Newman | Y-519 |
| Henry Wiehl Sr. | Y-522 |

Stevens Village

|                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| Kilbourn George   | Y-514 |
| William Pitka Sr. | Y-526 |

Fort Yukon

|               |        |        |
|---------------|--------|--------|
| Tommy Carroll | Box 65 | Y-1071 |
|---------------|--------|--------|

Circle

|                 |         |       |
|-----------------|---------|-------|
| Raymond C. Bell | Central | Y-945 |
|-----------------|---------|-------|

1972 Commercial Licenses Issued  
for 334-40  
(continued)

Eagle

|                    |        |        |
|--------------------|--------|--------|
| David G. Martini   | Box 4  | Y-971  |
| Clarence J. Waller | Box 72 | Y-1067 |

Manley Hot Springs

|                  |  |        |
|------------------|--|--------|
| Gerald W. Hudson |  | Y-1066 |
|------------------|--|--------|

Nenana

|                     |                        |        |
|---------------------|------------------------|--------|
| Dinah Albert        |                        | Y-988  |
| Thomas Albert       | Box 95                 | Y-504  |
| Rudolph Demientieff | Box 66                 | Y-1062 |
| Henry R. Ketzler    | Box 35                 | Y-980  |
| Steven Ketzler      | Box 35                 | Helper |
| Edmund G. Lord      | Box 26                 | Y-998  |
| Barbara J. Carson   |                        | Y-1069 |
| Reinhard Rupprecht  | Box 51                 | Y-502  |
| Renee A. Merry      | 1206 Coppet, Fairbanks | Y-984  |

Fairbanks

|                        |                  |        |
|------------------------|------------------|--------|
| Charles H. Anderson    | 1321 Karen St.   | Y-743  |
| Lester J. Fickes       | Box 2618         | Y-985  |
| Georgianna Lincoln     | 2508 Alstan Rd.  | Y-748  |
| Edward Mayo            | Box 2301         | Y-940  |
| Felix F. Rasmus        | 1705 Southern    | Y-516  |
| Catherine Ludecker     | 331 Clay St.     | Y-525  |
| Lloyd H. Pike          | 319 6th Avenue   | Y-1068 |
| Howard Luke            | Box G College    | Y-528  |
| Anita M. Henry         | 2 mi. Badger Rd. | Y-1070 |
| Moses Samuelson        | 631 Noyes St.    | Y-1072 |
| Gregg C. MacDonald Jr. | Box 81035        | Y-1073 |
| Frank Gurtler          | 17 Blanche St.   | Y-977  |
| William Carlo Sr.      | 2111 Southern    | Y-507  |

Table - Daily salmon catches for selected fishermen, upper Yukon River, 1972.

| Date | Lorraine Honea <sup>2/</sup><br>Ruby |      | Ray Folger <sup>1/</sup><br>Tanana |      | Raymond C. Bell <sup>2/</sup><br>Circle |      | Barbara J. Carson <sup>1/</sup><br>Nenana |      | Catherine Ludecker <sup>1/</sup><br>Fairbanks |      |
|------|--------------------------------------|------|------------------------------------|------|---|------|---|------|---|------|
|      | King                                 | Chum | King                               | Chum | King                                    | Chum | King                                      | Chum | King  | Chum |
| 6/25 | 1                                    |      |                                    |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| 6/26 | 0                                    |      |                                    |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| 6/27 | 0                                    |      |                                    |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| 6/28 | 2                                    |      |                                    |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| 6/29 | 3                                    |      |                                    |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| 6/30 | 3                                    |      |                                    |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| 7/1  | 3                                    |      |                                    |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| 7/2  | 2                                    |      |                                    |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| 7/3  | 3                                    |      |                                    |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| 7/4  | 5                                    |      |                                    |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| 7/5  | 11                                   |      |                                    |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| 7/6  | 2                                    |      |                                    |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| 7/7  | 5                                    |      |                                    |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| 7/8  | 0                                    |      |                                    |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| 7/9  | 0                                    |      |                                    |      |   |      |   |      |   | 1    |
| 7/10 | 2                                    |      |                                    |      |   |      |   |      |   | 0    |
| 7/11 | 6                                    |      | 8                                  |      |   |      |   |      |   | 0    |
| 7/12 | 9                                    |      | 2                                  |      |   |      |   |      |   | 3    |
| 7/13 | 20                                   |      | 13                                 | 24   |   |      |   |      |   | 5    |
| 7/14 | 37                                   |      | 14                                 | 22   |   |      |   |      |   | 8    |
| 7/15 | 22                                   | 5    | 26                                 | 26   |   |      |   |      |   | 7    |
| 7/16 | 14                                   | 4    | 11                                 | 25   |   |      |   |      |   | 9    |
| 7/17 | 14                                   | 6    |                                    |      | 7                                       |      |   |      |   | 11   |
| 7/18 | 17                                   | 9    | 25                                 | 74   | 2                                       |      |   |      |   | 15   |
| 7/19 | 12                                   |      | 11                                 | 3    | 0                                       |      |   |      |   | 14   |
| 7/20 | 15                                   |      | 14                                 | 64   | 4                                       |      |   |      |   | 13   |
| 7/21 | 11                                   |      | 1                                  | 49   | 1                                       |      |   |      |   | 17   |
| 7/22 | 7                                    |      | 4                                  | 37   | 1                                       |      |   |      |   | 21   |
| 7/23 | 4                                    |      | 1                                  | 39   | 5                                       |      |   |      |   | 16   |

Table (continued) - Daily salmon catches for selected fishermen, upper Yukon River, 1972.

| Date | Lorraine Honea <sup>2/</sup><br>Ruby |      | Ray Folger <sup>1/</sup><br>Tanana |      | Raymond C. Bell <sup>2/</sup><br>Circle |      | Barbara J. Carson <sup>1/</sup><br>Nenana |      | Catherine Ludecker <sup>1/</sup><br>Fairbanks |      |
|------|--------------------------------------|------|------------------------------------|------|---|------|---|------|---|------|
|      | King                                 | Chum | King                               | Chum | King                                    | Chum | King                                      | Chum | King  | Chum |
|      |                                      |      |                                    |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| 7/24 | 8                                    |      | 2                                  | 14   | 16                                      |      |   |      |   | 18   |
| 7/25 | 2                                    |      | 4                                  | 39   | 19                                      |      |   |      |   | 20   |
| 7/26 | 5                                    |      | 4                                  | 46   | 11                                      | 2    |   |      |   | 24   |
| 7/27 | 3                                    |      | 1                                  | 19   | 10                                      | 2    |   |      |   | 22   |
| 7/28 | 2                                    |      | 2                                  | 16   | 14                                      | 1    | 2   | 8    |   | 23   |
| 7/29 | 2                                    |      | 0                                  | 17   | 10                                      | 0    | 3   | 21   |   | 25   |
| 7/30 | 2                                    |      | 0                                  | 22   | 13                                      | 0    | 0   | 16   |   | 27   |
| 7/31 | 0                                    |      | 1                                  | 17   | 8                                       | 2    | 1   | 15   |   | 29   |
| 8/1  | 1                                    |      |                                    | 22   | 5                                       | 1    | 0   | 6    |   | 25   |
| 8/2  | 0                                    | 8    |                                    | 20   | 7                                       |      | 0   | 7    |   | 28   |
| 8/3  | 1                                    | 30   |                                    | 54   | 3                                       |      | 0   | 8    |   | 30   |
| 8/4  | 1                                    | 20   |                                    | 25   | 2                                       |      | 0   | 9    |   | 40   |
| 8/5  | 0                                    | 20   |                                    | 46   |   |      | 0   | 6    |   | 47   |
| 8/6  | 0                                    | 31   |                                    | 3    | 2                                       | 1    | 2   | 5    |   | 50   |
| 8/7  | 0                                    | 21   |                                    | 41   | 2                                       |      | 0   | 3    |   | 53   |
| 8/8  | 0                                    | 31   |                                    | 35   |   |      |   |      |   | 55   |
| 8/9  | 0                                    | 20   |                                    | 13   |   |      | 1   | 2    |   | 57   |
| 8/10 | 0                                    | 4    |                                    | 27   |   |      |   | 5    |   | 60   |
| 8/11 | 0                                    | 28   |                                    | 28   |   |      |   | 4    |   | 63   |
| 8/12 | 0                                    |      |                                    | 43   | 0                                       |      |   | 3    |   | 65   |
| 8/13 | 0                                    | 61   |                                    | 16   |   |      |   | 13   |   | 68   |
| 8/14 | 0                                    | 62   |                                    | 19   | 0                                       |      |   | 10   |   | 66   |
| 8/15 | 1                                    | 51   |                                    | 31   |   |      |   | 6    |   | 70   |
| 8/16 |                                      | 45   |                                    | 31   | 0                                       | 1    |   | 8    |   | 73   |
| 8/17 |                                      | 49   |                                    | 32   |   |      |   | 6    |   | 50   |
| 8/18 |                                      | 38   |                                    | 34   | 2                                       | 3    |   | 7    |   | 45   |
| 8/19 |                                      |      |                                    |      | 0                                       | 1    |   | 10   |   | 37   |
| 8/20 |                                      | 32   |                                    | 38   | 0                                       | 1    |   | 16   |   | 59   |
| 8/21 |                                      | 15   |                                    | 50   | 0                                       |      |   | 20   |   | 49   |



Table (continued) - Daily salmon catches for selected fishermen, upper Yukon River, 1972.

| Date | Lorraine Honea <sup>2/</sup><br>Ruby |      | Ray Folger <sup>1/</sup><br>Tanana |      | Raymond C. Bell <sup>2/</sup><br>Circle |      | Barbara J. Carson <sup>1/</sup><br>Nenana |      | Catherine Ludecker <sup>1/</sup><br>Fairbanks |      |
|------|--------------------------------------|------|------------------------------------|------|---|------|---|------|---|------|
|      | King                                 | Chum | King                               | Chum | King                                    | Chum | King                                      | Chum | King  | Chum |
| 9/20 |                                      |      |                                    |      | 49                                      |      | 84  |      | 92  |      |
| 9/21 |                                      |      |                                    |      | 27                                      |      | 57  |      | 87  |      |
| 9/22 |                                      |      |                                    |      |   |      | 45  |      | 102   |      |
| 9/23 |                                      |      |                                    |      |   |      | 138                                       |      | 101   |      |
| 9/24 |                                      |      |                                    |      |   |      | 98  |      | 108   |      |
| 9/25 |                                      |      |                                    |      |   |      | 48  |      | 110   |      |
| 9/26 |                                      |      |                                    |      |   |      | 56  |      | 103   |      |
| 9/27 |                                      |      |                                    |      |   |      | 106                                       |      | 106   |      |
| 9/28 |                                      |      |                                    |      |   |      | 104                                       |      | 104   |      |
| 9/29 |                                      |      |                                    |      |   |      | 132                                       |      | 107   |      |
| 9/30 |                                      |      |                                    |      |   |      | 106                                       |      | 109   |      |

<sup>1/</sup> Fishwheel operated.<sup>2/</sup> Gill net operated.